

**Meeting Date:** January 28-29, 2009

**Agenda Item No. 17**

**Agenda Item:** Pelican Management Plan (Action)

**Bureau Chief Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Program Manager

**Background:**

Numbers of American white pelicans, including adult nesting birds, have increased dramatically in southern Idaho since 2002. The increase in nesting birds has been documented at Idaho's two primary nesting colonies located on islands in Blackfoot Reservoir and Lake Walcott (Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge). Increases in pelican populations are generally considered as positive contributions to pelican conservation goals in the Western population segment, but the increased number of pelicans has also resulted in documented predation impacts on native cutthroat trout subspecies and other important recreational fisheries. The Department believes there is a need to develop an approach to manage conflicts in Idaho between pelicans and fish populations that balance conservation and recreation interests for both. This brief presentation will provide an overview of the management actions the Department proposes to implement to reduce conflicts between birds and fish in southeast Idaho. The Wildlife Bureau seeks approval from the Commission to solicit public review of this draft plan.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

This draft plan establishes management direction and provides objectives for pelican conservation. The plan contains both non-lethal (hazing birds, physical deterrents) and lethal (shooting birds, oiling eggs) management actions. Non-lethal methods could be implemented in 2009 following Commission approval of the plan. Because the American white pelican is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, however, authorization from the USFWS will be required before lethal take beyond that already permitted could occur. The Wildlife Bureau intends to seek Commission approval of the pelican management plan in March 2009; following such approval, the Department will request USFWS authorization to implement lethal control components of the plan. Prior to taking any action on the merits of this management plan, public review and comment is necessary.

**Public Involvement Process:**

To date, there has been no public involvement in developing this draft plan. We are seeking Commission approval for a 30-day public review period. Following this public comment period, the Wildlife Bureau will analyze and summarize results for the Commission for future action on this management plan for pelicans.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The Wildlife Bureau seeks Commission approval for a 30-day public comment period on this draft plan.

**Justification:**

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. In order for the Commission to consider adopting this document as an official Department species management plan, public review and input is necessary.